

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

THE SOUTHERN RACES OF THE GREAT ANT-SHRIKE,
TARABA MAJOR.

BY PIERCE BRODKORB.



When reviewing the forms of the great ant-shrike,¹ Mr. J. T. Zimmer was handicapped by lack of adequate material from Paraguay and Bolivia. We have recently received specimens from both sides of the Rio Paraguay, and through the courtesy of Mr. W. E. Clyde Todd I have also been able to study the Carnegie Museum's fine series of Bolivian birds. This material demonstrates the presence of three races in the southern part of the range of the species.

Taraba major major (Vieillot).

Thamnophilus major VIEILLOT, Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., nouv. éd., 3, 1816 : 313.—Based on Azara, Paraguay; now restricted to East Paraguay.

Thamnophilus magnus LESSON, Traité d'Orn., 5, 1830 : 375—same basis.
Thamnophilus rohdei BERLEPSCH, Journ. für Orn., 35, No. 177, January, 1887 : 16.—Lambaré, East Paraguay; a melanism.

Characters.—Bill large (culmen 26–27.5 mm.; depth of bill at posterior end of nostrils 9.5–10 mm.). Male with black bands on lateral rectrices 6–8 mm. wide, the white interspaces rather narrower; white tips to wing coverts reduced in extent. Female with upperparts ochraceous-tawny to dull amber brown; flanks, belly, and crissum strongly ochraceous.

Range.—Northeastern Argentina in northern Entrerios (Santa Elena) and Corrientes; Paraguay, east of the Rio Paraguay; western São Paulo (lower Rio Tieté); Goyaz (Rio Araguaya); southern Matto Grosso.

*Taraba major albatu*s, subsp. nov.

Type.—No. 90849, University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, male, 265 kilometers west of Puerto Casado, Paraguayan Chaco, 8 February, 1936, Alberto Schulze, original number 1647.

Characters.—Bill short, less attenuate, less deep (culmen 24–26 mm.;

¹Am. Mus. Novitates, No. 668, October 23, 1933.

depth of bill 8.5–9 mm.). Male with black bands of lateral retrices reduced (3–5 mm. in width), the white intrspaces wider; white tips to wing coverts more extensive. Female with upperparts much paler (ochraceous-tawny); flanks, belly, crissum, and auriculars more whitish, less ochraceous.

Range.—Paraguayan Chaco. Birds recorded from the territories of Formosa and Chaco and the Province of Santa Fé, northern Argentina, probably also belong here.

Taraba major virgultorum Cherrie.

Taraba major virgultorum CHERRIE, Bull. Am. Mus. Nat. Hist., 35, June 16, 1916 : 391.—Todos Santos, Rio Chaparé, Bolivia.

Taraba major kriegi LAUBMANN, Wiss. Ergebn. Deutsch. Gran Chaco Exped., Vögel, 1930 : 172.—Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

Characters.—Bill large, as in *major*. Male indistinguishable from *major*. Female with back more olive in tone than *major*, more reddish than *albatus*; auriculars pale as in *albatus*; underparts possibly even more strongly ochraceous than in *major*.

Range.—Northwestern Argentina in provinces of Tucumán, Salta, and Jujuy; Yungas of eastern Bolivia, north to Reyes and Trinidad.

This is rather an unsatisfactory form, scarcely differing from *major*, except in characters which are an approach to those of *albatus*. On the other hand its geographical position is by no means intermediate between *major* and *albatus*.

MATERIAL EXAMINED.

Thamnophilus major major.—East Paraguay: 20 km. south of Rosario, 6 ♂♂, 4 ♀♀.

Thamnophilus major albatus.—Paraguayan Chaco: 265 km. west of Puerto Casado, 5 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀.

Thamnophilus major virgultorum.—Salta: Embarcacion, 2 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀. Bolivia, Prov. Tarija: Yacuiba, 1 ♀. Prov. Santa Cruz: Buenavista, 2 ♂♂; Guanacos, 1 ♂; Palmarito, 1 ♂; Puerto Suarez, 3 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀; Rio Surutu, 1 ♂; Santa Cruz, 3 ♂♂.